

Scott, Erin

From: Kris Mackey [kristheclerk@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2003 9:05 AM
To: GEPittsfield@sra.com
Subject: Comment during public comment period re: Study PCB, Housatonic River, MA

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Enclosed is the following comment during the public comment period regarding the EAP report on PCB risks to fish and animals along the Housatonic River in MA, as reported in the Berkshire Eagle article by Derek Gentile, 7/19/03:

July 20, 2003

Re: Housatonic River Study Reports

From: Mr. David Mackey, 360 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201, Tel. # 413-499-7740

To Whom it May Concern:

First off, as an avid hunter and fisherman, averaging over 200 days a year afield, I am of course interested in any study that directly affects my outdoor activities. This recent report in the Berkshire Eagle with regards to PCB's and deformed fish is absurd in my opinion. I don't mind studies, but let's not call something what it's not. I'll be direct to the point; first off, I have fished the Housatonic for over 40 years. I fished it earlier in my career when the stench of the river would give me a headache if I spent any amount of time on it. In the early and late sixties, I killed and ate hundred of frogs out of Woods Pond, and fish. I fished it when you could cast a sinking lure out on the surfact and it would not sink and lay on the surface scum. When the lure eventually sank, it took the scum with it.

Over the last 20 years, I have noticed that the Housatonic river is now beautiful again, and I always have called it one of Berkshire County's best kept secrets. The people who fish this river and canoe on it know exactly what I'm talking about. Also, if you know the river, you'll know that there are dozens and dozens of backwater areas that go back a quarter mile and are a quarter mile wide. To say you are going to clean up the river (by dredging main river bottom) is like saying your toilet just overflowed with sewage all over your bathroom floor, and all you are gong to do is just clean up the toilet. It took you forever to do just the little section here by my house, off Newell Str., and I'll tell you, that was the easy part; wait till you get into the jungle area I call it, swamps and backwaters, and....from here to Connecticut?? No, Sir, not in your lifetime. Hey, we screwed up (with PCB's), but let's not make things worse, unless of course you have your own agendas.

As for the fish being "deformed", with their air bladders hanging out of their bodies?? On approximately "50 percent of the fish"?? Where did you come up with this?? I have fished the Housatonic hundreds of days and have taken hundreds of fish out of Woods Pond and up for over a mile up river from there. Huge Northren Pike, large bass, perch, and Brown Trout you have to see to believe, and the only thing hanging out of their bodies was my lure. I have about 100 photos of different fish I have taken out of this area, over the last several years and I would be glad to send them on to you if you wish. The only deformity I can see is, they are big and strong for their size. One thing, I have noticed the color on, let's say, the yellow perch and some of the bass is a little off-color, however, fish do change color to fit their environment; and I have occasionally noticed sores on the gill plates on some of the bass and perch from time to time, but I have also seen these same sores on fish that I have taken on Ashmere Lake, Thousand Acres, Stockbridge Bowl, etc.

In closing, it's my opinion that you should leave the river alone. It will cleanse itself in time, a lot faster than you can clean it and better, too. Also, I was just wondering, who was the proud recipient of this river bottom you removed from the Newell Street Area??

Very truly yours,

Mr. David Mackey

(mailed aslo to Alison Wolfe, MNG Center, SRA, 2801 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 100, Arlington VA 22201)

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